

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4293
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT,IT,US
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTS COMMENTS SPARK SPECULATION REGARDING CHANGED
US POSITION TOWARDS EUROCOMMUNIST PARTIES

1. SOME SECTIONS OF THE ITALIAN MEDIA ARE INTERPRETING
PRESIDENT CARTER'S RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ON EUROCOMMUNISM
AT HIS JULY 15 APPEARANCE BEFORE THE CIVIC ASSEMBLY AS
REPRESENTING A SHIFT IN THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY
REGARDING COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN WESTERN EUROPEAN
GOVERNMENTS. THOSE MAKING THIS INTERPRETATION ARE GENERALLY
IGNORING THE PORTION OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS WHICH
FOLLOW CLOSELY THE JANUARY 12 STATE DEPARTMENT STATEMENT
ON THE SUBJECT AND ARE FOCUSING ON HIS OBSERVATIONS ABOUT
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THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY'S CRITICISM OF THE SHCHARANSKY
TRIAL AND ABOUT THE FACT THAT EUROCOMMUNISM IS NOT A
MONOLITHIC STRUCTURE COMPLETELY DOMINATED BY THE SOVIET
UNION.

2. SAMPLE COMMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS: (A) CORRIERE DELLA
SERA (JULY 17) --UNDER HEADLINE EUROCOMMUNISM: CARTER IS

LESS DRASTIC THE NEWSPAPER NOTES THAT QUOTE WITH RESPECT TO SIX MONTHS AGO THERE IS SOME NEW ACCENT ON THE US ATTITUDE END QUOTE. (B) PAESE SERA (JULY 17)-- A SOFTER JUDGEMENT OF THE USA ABOUT EUROCOMMUNISM. LESS CLOSED ATTITUDE OF THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT. (C) L'UNITA (JULY 17)-- A MORE ARTICULATED JUDGEMENT OF CARTER ABOUT EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES. (D) IT GIORNO (JULY 16)-- CARTER: EUROCOMMUNISM EVEN HAS BENEFICIAL ASPECTS. (E) LA REPUBBLICA (JULY 16-17)-- CARTER EUROCOMMUNISM IS NO LONGER TIED TO MOSCOW. (F) IL MESSAGGERO (JULY 18)-- CARTER CONFIRMS A POSITIVE JUDGEMENT ON WESTERN COMMUNIST PARTIES. CARTER: EUROCOMMUNISM DOES NOT HAVE TIES WITH MOSCOW. GENERALLY MORE LIBERAL SPECULATION ABOUT THE PRESIDENTS REMARKS HAS BEEN MADE BY LEFT-LEANING PRESS (LA REPUBBLICA, IL MESSAGGERO) AND BY OFFICIAL ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY NEWSPAPER (L'UNITA) AND BY A PCI CONTROLLED ROME DAILY (PAESE SERA). HOWEVER, IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT TWO NEWSPAPERS (CORRIERE DELLA SERA AND IL GIORNO), GENERALLY IDENTIFIED AS BEING CENTRIST, HAVE GIVEN THE PRESIDENTS COMMENTS A SIMILAR INTERPRETATION.

3. COMMUNIST PARTY OFFICIALS IN INITIAL PUBLIC COMMENTS ON PRESIDENTS REMARKS HAVE ASSESSED THEM POSITIVELY. SPEAKING ON TELEVISION JULY 17, PCI SECRETARIAT MEMBER GIORGIO NAPOLITANO SAID THAT THE PRESIDENTS ALLEGEDLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MORE OPEN ATTITUDE TO EUROCOMMUNISM CONFORMS TO IMPRESSIONS HE GATHERED DURING HIS RECENT VISIT THE THE UNITED STATES. PCI FOREIGN SECTION CHIEF SERGIO SEGRE IN AN INTERVIEW APPEARING IN MILAN DAILY IL GIORNO JULY 18 SAID : QUOTE IT (THE PRESIDENT'S VIEW) IS A JUDGEMENT WHICH TAKES

REALISTIC ACCOUNT OF A POSITION THAT IS BEING EXPRESSED ALWAYS MORE CLEARLY IN EUROPEAN POLITICAL LIFE; I REFER TO THE VIEWS OF COMMUNIST PARTIES THAT MORE FROM A CONVICTION OF THE UNIVERSAL VALUE OF DEMOCRACY AND OPERATE THEREFORE FOR A SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE FOUNDED UPON DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTY... EVERYTHING THAT INDICATES REALISTIC POSITION NOT QUESTIONED BY IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL PRE-CONCEPTIONS IS WELCOMED AS CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WIDE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE POLITICAL FORCES WHICH IS TODAY A FUNDAMENTAL NECESSITY. END QUOTE:

4. IN THE HIGHLY CHARGED POLITICAL CLIMATE THAT EXISTS TODAY IN ITALY, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE PRESS INCLUDING THAT PORTION OF IT MORE SYMPATHETIC TO THE LEFT HAS SEIZED UPON THE PRESIDENTS COMMENTS IN AN ATTEMPT TO

CONVEY A MORE OPEN ATTITUDE TO THE PCI THAN THAT EXPRESSED
IN THE DEPARTMENTS JANUARY 12 STATEMENT. RATHER THAN RUN
THE RISK THAT THIS SPECULATION CONTINUE WITH THE RESULT
THAT THE TRUE NATURE OF OUR POLICY BECOMES EVEN MORE
CONFUSED IN THE PUBLIC MIND WE BELIEVE THAT RAPID ACTION
TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE.
ACCORDINGLY WE RECOMMEND THAT IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION
AT ONE OF THIS REGULAR PRESS SESSIONS THE DEPARTMENT
SPOKESMEN BE AUTHORIZED TO REITERATE THE US GOVERNMENT'S
POLICY ON COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN NATO GOVERNMENTS AS
EXPRESSED IN THE JANUARY 12 DEPARTMENT STATEMENT.
GARDNER

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